DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 326 418 SE 051 777

TITLE From Classroom Teacher to Field Trip Leader. Hints for Getting There.

INSTITUTION Lee County School District, Ft. Myers, FL. Dept. of Environmental Education and Instructional Development Services.

PUB DATE 88

NOTE 19p.; For related documents, see SE 051 766-776.

AVAILABLE FROM Department of Environmental Education, Lee County Schools, 2055 Central Avenue, Ft. Myers, FL 33901 (0.75).

PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.

DESCRIPTORS Educational Objectives; *Elementary School Science; Elementary Secondary Education; *Field Studies; *Interdisciplinary Approach; Science Activities; Science Education; *Secondary School Science; *Teaching Guides

ABSTRACT

The idea of leaving the classroom and taking students outdoors where no structural boundaries exist can be unnerving for some teachers. Field trip experiences and out-of-the-classroom experiences are important for students. It takes concrete experiences for the students to understand and retain concepts and terms they have read and discussed in class. This document lists general responsibilities and helpful hints for leading outdoor field experiences. The guide discusses teaching techniques, available community study units, and steps for arranging and leading field trips. Appended are a request for special bus transportation with policy, and a sample parent permission form. (CW)

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FROM CLASSROOM TEACHER TO FIELD TRIP LEADER

Hints for getting there

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LEE COUNTY SCHOOLS
COMMUNITY STUDY PROGRAM

Instructional Development Services and Environmental Education

SE051777

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FROM CLASSROOM TEACHER TO FIELD TRIP LEADER...

The idea of leaving the classroom and taking students outdoors where no structural boundaries exist is, at the least, unnerving for some teachers. You know that field trips and out-of-the-classroom experiences are important for your students or you wouldn't be reading this. You know that it takes "concrete" experiences for students to understand and, in fact, retain the concepts and terms they've read and discussed in class. You know that all students learn in different ways and field trips give them a different way to learn. You know all these things, yet how do you provide this experience for your students when the experts are not available? You become the field trip leader...yes, you can do it, and you can do it very well.

Teaching outside the classroom is very similar to teaching inside the classroom. You still need to start by identifying specific learning objectives and setting up expectations for behavior as well as academic activities. That doesn't mean your students should be silent and walk in a straight line during the entire field trip, but they should know when and by what signal they need to do those things. It is really all a matter of pre-planning.

> Where teaching is being done happily and successfully, the teacher is most often an enthusiastic participant.

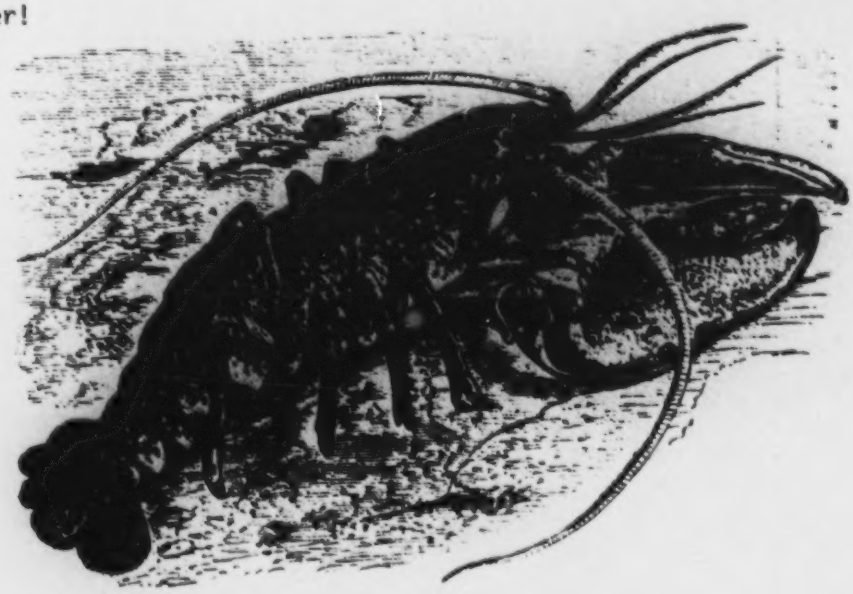
This doesn't mean you have to know all the facts and figures about everything, but it does mean being enthusiastic and willing to learn along with the group.

Learn some facts about your subject, but don't try to know everything. Be comfortable knowing that you are also an enthusiastic participant and that making the trip exciting and fun (as well as focused on the main concept) will help your students develop and use the natural sense of curiosity that resides in each of us.

There is so much more than just learning the names of things.

You can have fun with your students and still have control. The most serious risk you face is being sure that you are not negligent in the planning of the trip and in the supervision of your students during the trip. The test is - Have you done what any prudent thoughtful person would be expected to do? Set up your expectations and rules; then look, share, discover, and enjoy within those bounds.

The following pages list general responsibilities and helpful hints for leading outdoor field experiences. Read them again and again. Then, add your own insights once you've led a few trips. If you're willing to try you'll only get better!



Field Trip Leader Hints and Helps

Responsibilities

1) PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY - Even though you do a significant amount of specific pre-planning, you may find that you will need to modify your plans, approaches, and techniques depending on the needs and attitudes of your students. Thus, you will find that not just one, but many ways work well in achieving the same basic objective. Don't be reluctant to change. You'll be a better teacher, learn more, and have more fun if you are open to and indeed seek new ideas.

2) ROLE MODEL - The environmental ethic should exude from your pores. Pick up that random piece of litter rather than demand that your behavior problem do it. Eat all your lunch. Enjoy the swamp. Honor the alligator!

3) PREPARE YOURSELF - Make sure you are thoroughly familiar with all the teacher materials, student materials, suggested pre- and post-activities, and field workbooks or other materials. Review the field trip notes and prepare your own note cards, time sequence chart or other recall technique for your particular trip. Be ready with alternative activities in the event the weather is too cold or rainy, or student behavior suggests that certain activities would not work or would be completed faster than normal.

4) EQUIP YOURSELF - You should take garbage bags, pencils, a pencil sharpener, and any student workbooks or papers needed. Some trips will require special equipment such as nets, string or hand lenses, which are all available from the IDSEE department.

5) INVOLVE THE CHAPERONES - As much as possible, get the chaperones involved directly with activities. Discuss with them beforehand the types of assistance you will need throughout the day.

6) LOCUS OF CONTROL - Options - The solution to environmental problems is dependent upon an involved public. An individual's involvement is, in turn, dependent upon the perception of the potential of having a positive impact. If you feel you can make a difference, you'll try. On a field trip, this translates as attempts to involve the students in the decision making and a sensitivity on the part of the leader to students' needs and desires. Where possible, the students should be allowed to choose activities, routes, mealtimes, etc. Build in options and let the students know them.

7) SAFETY - While on the bus, students should remain seated whenever the bus is in motion. They may speak quietly to their immediate neighbors. Everything must be kept inside the windows, including hands, heads, papers, trash, voices, etc. No eating or drinking is allowed on the bus. No radios or tape players are allowed on the bus. During the field trip, students must wear their shoes at all times. <u>There is no swimming allowed on IDS/EE trips</u>.

8) COUNT STUDENTS - Count the students and chaperones before you leave the school. Count them often during the trip. Always count them prior to leaving the field trip site.

9) EQUIPMENT - Demonstrate and use equipment properly. Clean it well and return it to it's proper place after use.

10) ATTITUDE - Be positive, energetic, caring, loving, fun, warm, friendly, and helpful - <u>all day long.</u>

TEACHING TECHNIQUES FOR LEADING TRIPS OUTDOORS

1) STARTING RIGHT - Your first introduction to the students is critical. It will set the mood for the entire day! Your own tone of voice and general approach will set the pace for the trip. Younger students may need step by step directions, where older students often need few verbal rules.

2) EXPECTATIONS FOR BEHAVIOR - Clear expectations for student participation and behavior should be communicated clearly before the trip. You should provide some rationale for necessary behaviors before resorting to punishment or threats. Do not threaten with consequences you are not able or willing to deliver. Some possible consequences to overt misbehavior might include terminating a particular activity or even the whole field trip.

3) INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES - The following instructional techniques are listed in order of increasing impact:

Discussion
Printed Materials
Radio, recordings
T.V., Movies
Demonstrations, Field Trips
Simulation Activities
Direct, Immediate Experiences

4) JOSEPH CORNELL SAYS - "The lesson is never more important than the child's inner self." Maslow talks about that stuff, too. First satisfy physical needs (full stomach, empty bladder),

provide security (no snake bites), next encourage emotional support (peer acceptance), develop self esteem (good job!), and expect some work on the lesson.

5) FACE THE SUN - If you are facing the sun, the children are not. That's good.

6) SETTING THE PACE - Schedule active and quiet activities to alternate. Be sensitive to the sequence so that the quietest activity is not immediately following the loudest activity.

7) LEARNING STYLES AND MODALITIES - Keep in mind our commitment to honoring the variety of learning styles that students exhibit and prefer. Try to incorporate as many learning modalities as possible into the day's activities: kinesthetic, visual, auditory, abstract/symbolic, and, of course, olfactory.

8) INFORMATIVE INTRODUCTIONS - The psych researchers have discovered that an outline or foreshadowing discussion can greatly improve retention of the information that follows. Make sure the students know at the onset the day's schedule, as well as the chief concepts you expect them to learn. This gives them a framework from which to hang the content of the day. View the experience as a story to be told, then tell it the best you can.

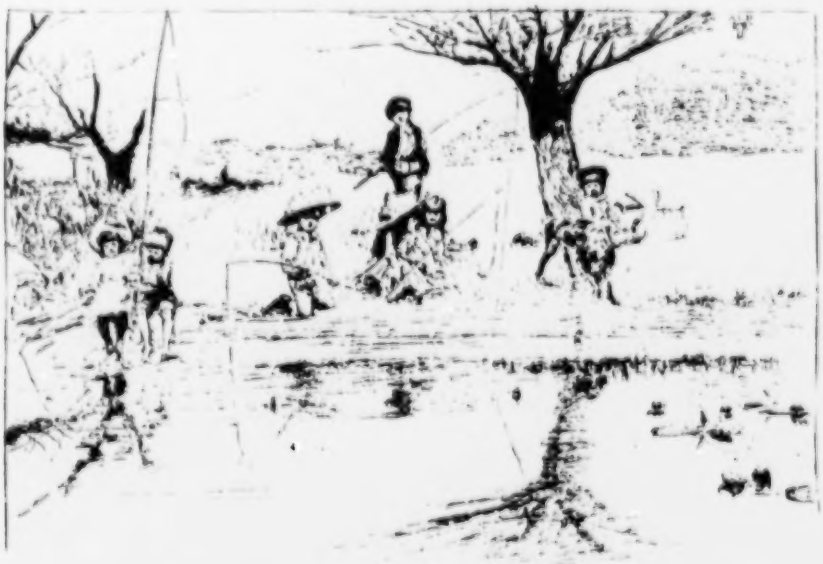
9) REDUNDANT REPETITION - Return to main concepts often and approach them from as many ways as is possible. Review and wrap up at the end of the day.

10) THE PAUSE THAT ENCOURAGES - When asking a question, don't expect an instant answer. A delay of just three seconds can allow most students to organize their thoughts and compose themselves for an answer.

11) ENSURE ATTENTION - Ask the students to look at you when you talk. Have them repeat your instructions. Wait for full class attention before proceeding and be CONSISTENT!!!

12) EMPATHIZE AND STRETCH - Know where the children are in the sense of knowledge, of experience, of interest, of vocabulary. Try to see the experiences from their eyes. Don't lose them in the fog of jargon. Once you're with them (and they are with you) try to stretch them beyond the abilities with which they arrived.

13) SERENDIPITY - "Give the great blue heron ten minutes" (Steve VanMatre). On most field trips there will be interruptions; an alligator may swim by or the squirrels may surround you for their personal handouts. If student attention has been lost, you'll be better off to capitalize on the event than to try to overcome it. Weave the moment into your program and get back on the track as soon as possible. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know." Let them know how they can find answers when you don't know. This allows the students to do some investigation back at school. You may even wish to feign ignorance at times. Use it to promote on-site or back-at-school inquiry.



SUMMARY

Being a good field trip leader is much like being a classroom teacher. You like being a classroom teacher. You prepare yourself, plan your lessons, and teach with enthusiasm. Your students will be thankful for the adventure and the chance to learn in a new setting. Familiarize yourself with the techniques suggested in this booklet. Plan your lessons carefully. Enjoy the field trip with your students. They will benefit from your efforts.

The following page outlines specific procedures necessary for arranging your field trip. Included are sample forms which you will use during the planning process. Relax, get excited and enjoy your trips.

COMMUNITY STUDY UNITS
INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
'86-87

These recommended grade level trips have been written to correlate closely with the established School District Continuum objectives in Social Studies and Science with ties to the Language Arts and Math. The trips are actually full teaching units with a variety of pre/post-trip activities which honor a wide range of learning styles. They provide interdisciplinary learning experiences and, with the full K-8 series, will introduce the students to the major ecological and human designed systems in Lee County.

K Walking Tours - A variety of model walking tours in school, on campus, and in the neighborhood has been created. These units deal with such topics as water, gardening, and fields and forests. Sites: dependent on location of school.

1 Communities - Comparisons are made among various communities by looking at the plant and animal life present. Sites: Nature Center of Lee County, Caloosahatchee Recreation Areas, Koreshan State Historic Site, or other natural sites in Lee County.

2 Cycles in the Sand - Changes caused by the sun, water, and people are observed. The water cycle and other life cycles are introduced. Sites: Sanibel Lighthouse Beach, Bonita Beach.

3 Web of Life - Living things are interrelated in a complex food web. These living things can be classified as producers, consumers, and decomposers. Energy flows and matter cycles throughout this food web. Sites: Punta Rassa Mudflat, Bokeelia Mudflat.

4 Florida's Human Heritage - Until recently, Lee County was remote, at the edge of the wilderness. This unit explores how various people have interacted with local resources. Sites: Koreshan State Historic Site, Edison's Winter Home, or Fort Myers Historical Museum.

5 Spice of Life - Diversity and a continuous flow of energy are important to the stability of communities. Two woodland sites are compared. Sites: Florida Power & Light Pine Plantation and the Nature Center of Lee County or the Caloosahatchee Recreation Area.

6 Adaptation - Life and technology have both adapted to meet the requirements of specific environments. Birds are examined closely to determine for what "jobs" they are best suited. Site: J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge.

7 Choices Between - South Florida's unique water dynamics are investigated closely. Students investigate their personal contributions to the water situation and consider options which might help ensure an adequate future water supply. Sites: Six Mile Cypress and Ten Mile Canal.

8 Energy and Us - Electric power generation and energy consumption are investigated. Site: Fort Myers generating facility.

9-12 Beaches in Motion - Students study the physical dynamics of several Sanibel beaches. Sites: Captiva Beach, Bowman's Beach, Lighthouse Beach.

9-12 Mudflats and Mangroves - Mudflat and mangrove habitats are investigated. Sites: Punta Rassa, The Mantanzas Pass Wilderness Preserve, and Carl Johnson Park.

9-12 Succession - The biological concept of succession is investigated. Site: Caloosahatchee Recreation Area.

STEPS FOR ARRANGING AND LEADING YOUR OWN FIELD TRIP

Environmental Education Assisted Trips

An EE assisted trip is a field trip developed by IDSEE, led by you the teacher and assisted by a trained bus driver/field trip aide from the Transportation Department. These bus drivers make regular school runs but have been trained to help you organize and sometimes lead instruction on Environmental Education field trips. To arrange for an EE asisted trip you should follow these steps:

1) Call IDSEE at 275-3033 to check on dates, availability of sites and equipment.

2) Request a bus from the Transportation Department by filing MIS 243 - "Request for Special Bus Transportion" form with that department. On the line titled "Reason for Transportation Request" write: "environmental education field trip", grade _____, and trip topic. This assures that a trained driver will be assigned to drive for your trip (see Appendix for sample).

3) Send permission slips home to parents (see Appendix for sample).

4) Arrange for lunches through the school cafeteria or have students bring their own.

5) Use materials provided by IDSEE to prepare students for the field trip, doing pretrip activities and explaining your expectations for the field trip.

6) Call Transportation Department five to seven days prior to your trip to confirm trip date and time of pick-up.

7) Call IDSEE to arrange for pick-up and return of equipment needed for your trip.

APPENDIX

SCHOOL BOARD OF LEE COUNTY
POLICY ON USE OF SCHOOL BUSES FOR EXTRA TRIPS

1. That use of buses not be permitted for transportation of any groups not connected with and sponsored by a county school.

2. That all out-of-town trips for which school buses are used shall be limited to points within a radius of seventy-five miles of the school.

3. That school board cannot legally, and therefore shall not, pay expenses of any school group to district or state contests. (This does not preclude use of school buses for transportation)

4. That requisition for transportation be submitted to the Transportation office at least five days in advance of each trip. Request must be made on requisition form MIS-243 (12/83).

5. That no field trips shall be scheduled that will alter, interfere, interrupt or change the regular transportation schedules.

6. Food and/or drinks may be transported on the bus, only when approved by the school principal and prepared in the school cafeteria.

7. That only regular drivers approved by the Board are to be employed on these trips.

8. That buses are not to be requested for any occasion unless the trips are carefully planned by the respective principals, who shall also arrange for proper escort or chaperone for each bus. All trips are to have adequate supervision (at least one teacher per class) so as to maintain order on the bus, and it is the responsibility of the teacher to make certain through classroom discussion that the students are thoroughly familiar with bus rules and know that they are required to obey these rules.

9. That the conduct of all passengers on the bus shall be the teacher's responsibility.

10. That eating, drinking and/or singing will not be permitted on buses.

11. That only stops approved in the original request are to be made.

12. That teacher(s) and bus driver are jointly responsible for the safety of students and equipment.

13. Drivers and teachers shall not smoke in buses while carrying students.

14. That any damage caused by vandalism which is not covered by insurance must be paid for by the school using the bus if the damage is done by any school group using the bus.

15. That no buses be used for any trips (other than on regular bus route) without the approval of the Director of Transportation.

16. That the Transportation Office must be advised of cancellation at least two (2) days prior to the date of the trip.

17. That changes of dates and places after confirmation will require that a new requisition be submitted to Transportation and the original request will be cancelled.

18. For charges and additional information, see Administrative Procedures - Transportation Department - Trips, Guidelines.

SCHOOL BOARD OF LEE COUNTY
REQUEST FOR SPECIAL BUS TRANSPORTATION

Date _____

School _____ Date of Trip _____

Location of Loading Area _____

Transportation to _____ Address _____

Other Stop _____ Time _____ Address _____

Scheduled Departure Time _____ AM _____ PM Number of Persons to be Transported _____

Scheduled Returning Time _____ AM _____ PM Teacher in Charge _____

Reason for Transportation Request _____

Who will Pay for Trip? _____
(Name of Department, School, or Other)

_____
Signature of Principal

Include accounting data if paid from budgetary funds.

(OFFICE USE ONLY)

LOCATION	FUND	CC	FUNCTION	PROGRAM	OBJECT	AMOUNT (dr/cr)

DRIVER'S REPORT

DEPARTED

Date _____ Time _____

Odometer Reading _____

Verified Correct _____
Teacher/Chaperone Signature

RETURNED

Date _____ Time _____

Odometer Reading _____

_____
Driver Signature

Bus Number _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Total Trip Hours _____ X $ _____ (Rate) = $ _____

Retirement ..... $ _____

Social Security ..... $ _____

Total Trip Miles _____ X $ _____ (Rate) = $ _____

Other Expense _____ $ _____

GRAND TOTAL $ _____

SAMPLE

PARENT PERMISSION FORM

As parent or legal guardian, I hereby grant permission for _____ (student's name) to take part in the field trip by school bus on _____ (date). I understand that the students will be studying outdoor communities at _____ (site(s)) as part of their ongoing curriculum.

_____
(Parent or Guardian)

_____
(date)

_____
(emergency phone number)

This publication is one of the teaching units in the community studies series developed by the Lee County Schools, Florida.

The community study series is designed to assist teachers and students in learning through experience how the Lee County communities function, and the rights and responsibilities each of us shares in maintaining a healthy, productive community.

By systematically experiencing our community, students tend to see the pattern that connects the natural and cultural environment, and how each of us is an independent agent for change.

The community study instructional units have been field tested by teachers and students.

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The units have been produced by the staff of THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES of Lee County school system:

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